Convent of our Lady of Mercy,
No. 32
WORCESTER, MASS.

Case I.

St. Anne's-m-

MOTHER MARY OF THE PASSION

LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.
By the Very Rev. Father CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C. With 13 Illustrations. Crown 8vo, $4.00 net.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI. A Biography.
By JOHANNES JÖRGENSEN. Translated by T. O'CONOR SLOANE. With 5 Illustrations. 8vo, $4.00 net.

THE ROMANTICISM OF ST. FRANCIS, and other Studies in the Genius of the Franciscans.
By the Very Rev. Father CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C. With Frontispiece. 8vo.

ALMANAC OF THE FRANCISCAN MISSIONS, 1924.
Crown 4to.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

NEW YORK, TORONTO, LONDON, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA AND MADRAS

THE SERVANT OF GOD MOTHER MARY OF THE PASSION
Helen-Mary-Philippine de Chappotin de Neuville
Born at Nantes May 21st 1839
Died at San Remo November 15th 1904

MOTHER MARY OF THE PASSION

FOUNDRESS OF THE
FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES OF MARY

(1839–1904)

BY

DOMINIC DEVAS, O.F.M.

AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF ST. LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE,"
"ST. BONAVENTURE ON THE RELIGIOUS LIFE," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.
55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
TORONTO, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

FRANC. MISS. OF MARY
225 EAST 45TH STREET
NEW YORK CITY

1924

C46d

Nihil obstat

F. Edwinus, O.F.M.
Censor deputatus.

Imprimatur

F. Anselmus Keane, O.F.M.
Minister Angliæ.

Londini, apud S. Antonium,
Die 15 *Novembris,* 1923.

Nihil obstat

C. Schut
Censor deputatus.

Imprimatur

Edm: Can: Surmont,
Vic. Gen.

Westmonasterii,
Die 29 *Novembris,* 1923

Made in Great Britain

FOREWORD

THE following is a very inadequate account of the life of a great and saintly woman. It pleads in extenuation that so far there is nothing else in English. It comes as an advance guard hoping something more worthy and durable is behind. It is based mainly on a large Life, published by the Institute of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in French in 1913, and a smaller one, published in Paris in 1922, by Fr. Mary-Bernard Hygonet, O.F.M., of the Province of Aquitaine.

St. Antony's,
Forest Gate.

In obedience to the decrees of Pope Urban VIII and other Sovereign Pontiffs, the writer declares that the graces and other supernatural facts related in this volume as witnessing to the Sanctity of Servants of God other than those canonised or beatified by Holy Church, rest on human authority alone; and in regard thereto, as in all things else, the writer submits himself without reserve to the infallible judgment of the Apostolic See, which alone has power and authority to pronounce as to whom rightly belongs the Character and Title of Saint or Blessed.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	Foreword	v
I.	Early Years (1839–1866) . . .	9
II.	India and Beyond (1866–1876) . .	16
III.	The New Institute (1877–1884) . .	24
IV.	Four Continents	43
V.	Character and Writings . . .	67
VI.	Last Days and Death (1903–1904) .	77

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PORTRAIT OF MOTHER MARY OF THE PASSION — *Frontispiece*

Facing page

HELEN DE CHAPPOTIN AT THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN — 12

LES CHÂTELETS, ONCE THE COUNTRY HOUSE BELONGING TO THE BISHOPS OF ST. BRIEUC — 27
From a Photograph.

CHÂTEAU DU FORT, WHERE HELEN DE CHAPPOTIN PASSED HER YOUTH, NOW A CONVENT OF THE INSTITUTE . . . . .
From a Photograph.

CLOISTERS OF THE MOTHER HOUSE AT ROME . 45
From a Photograph.

CONVENT AT COIMBATORE, INDIA, FOUNDED IN 1878 49
From a Photograph.

NOVITIATE, GROTTAFERRATA, NEAR ROME . 55
From a Photograph.

CHAPEL OF THE NOVITIATE, LES CHÂTELETS . 78
From a Drawing.

ST. HELEN'S CHAPEL, ROME 83
From a Photograph.

MOTHER MARY OF THE PASSION

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS. (1839–1866.)

LIKE many others whom God chose during the last century to enrich His Church with new religious foundations, Helen de Chappotin—the subject of this brief sketch—was born in Northern France, at Nantes in Brittany, on May 21, 1839. She came of a warlike stock, and had many soldiers among the line of her ancestors—du Fort, on her mother's side, Chappotin and Gusman on her father's—and doubtless owed some part of the courageous tenacity of later life to an inherited strain of martial vigour.

Helen's first years were passed at the Château du Fort, a few miles outside Nantes. Here dwelt in patriarchal fashion, not merely the family of Madame Chappotin, but that also of her brother Alphonsus du Fort, a community—that is the fitting word—of

fifteen, composed of " the four parents " and eleven children. Helen herself had two brothers and two sisters, and with this group of five is mingled her six cousins. She appears as the baby of the party, and is familiarly known as *Lena.* One day as she fondles her doll it suddenly occurs to her infant mind that her love finds no response in this handful of sawdust, fashioned faintly no doubt after some human model and clad in infinitesimal fragments of real clothes, but after all insensible to her tenderest marks of devotion. Happiness, so she tells us afterwards, she thought to lie in loving and *being loved:* dolls' days are abruptly done with. Henceforth she feeds her imagination, listening with delight to ancient tales of Breton heroism, gazing wonderingly at the old monuments of Nantes, or hanging on the words of a Missionary Bishop who pays a fleeting visit to his old school-fellow, Helen's father, and recounts his experiences. " Oh, do please stop, my Lord," pleads the anxious mother, " you are giving my child a vocation." But the good Bishop proceeds, and Helen, who would never " leave Mama," declares at the finish, " I shall be a Missionary." At ten she was a determined child, and already a reader. Punished on

one occasion by temporary deprivation of her favourite books, "Oh, very well," she replied, "I shall write one myself," and proceeded forthwith to the task. In May, 1850, she made her first Communion. Her mother, a splendid example of that fine French mingling of nobility and earnest piety, had seen to her preparation, and the event was marked by all the devotion and fervour we should expect in one brought up in so eminently Catholic a household.

Soon afterwards we find death busy dispersing that happy group. The first to go was Helen's cousin, Aurelia du Fort, a girl only four years older than herself. Then her eldest sister, Martina, died; then, a few years later, in 1854, her second sister, Louise, who not long before had married, and now left three motherless children. Helen was fifteen. For two years she lived on—a rather colourless life—in the Château near Nantes. In after life she would look back on these days and call them "the unfaithful period." One may perhaps suspect that the death of those to whom she had been passionately devoted tended to make her find, in satisfying her own fancies, that sufficient outlay of energy which else had gone in contributing to the pleasure of others: and no doubt she was

in danger of being spoilt both by parents and friends.

Happily for all, Helen was not left to linger long in uncertainties and emptiness. In April, 1856, a retreat was preached to the Children of Mary—of whom Helen was one—at the Sacred Heart Convent at Nantes. The preacher was Père Lavigne, a Jesuit. He seems to have spoken pointedly of the designs of God on individual souls, and his words found a ready response in the heart of Helen. Henceforth the main purpose of her life was decisively fixed—she was determined to consecrate herself to God—and though some years were wisely left to elapse before final steps were taken, the objective was never henceforth lost sight of, and already in the home a mortified life was begun.

In January, 1859, when Helen was nearly twenty, it was arranged—on the advice of Père Lavigne—that she should go to Paris and make a Retreat there with the Cenacle Nuns. He expected, it appears, that she would find in that Congregation the vocation God destined for her. Such, however, was not to be the case. On the eve of her departure for Paris, Madame Chappotin, her mother, had a stroke, and after eight days—days of agony for Helen—she died. Im-

Helen de Chappolin de Neuville at eighteen

possible for the time being to follow up her vocation. Other duties became pressingly insistent, and for two years she acts as the young mistress of the household at Château du Fort, busy over the multifarious duties of housekeeping. Then in 1861—the family group standing doubtless no longer in need of her young mothering—Helen entered as a Postulant into the Convent of Poor Clares at Nantes. The first mistake, the world would say, forgetful how often, as for example in the case of St. Colette, God calls souls by what we may call the *groping way*, rather than the straight. It was Helen's first grope, and immensely valuable as such, teaching her to mistrust herself, and fitting her, when the time came, admirably to guide others. She left the Clares, after a month or so, at the joint urging of friends and personal prudence, for her health would not stand the strain. On returning to the Château she resumed once more her old life and duties, helped considerably, from the spiritual point of view, by the sensible yet austere direction of a Discalced Carmelite, Père Alexis. When distance and sickness put an end to his ministrations, Helen became acquainted with a well-known Jesuit of the period, Père George Petit. Him God

used to cast more definite light on Helen's path, for on his advice it was arranged for her to enter the newly founded Society of Marie-Réparatrice. The night before she was to leave for Paris to meet the Foundress, Helen's father, a figure of which we see too little, just said to her, " My daughter, there is time still." It was a sort of plaintive appeal, based on the grief of parting and reminiscent of an earlier one. Helen could only answer, " Sadness must not make me change now the resolution I took under obedience when everything was clear." The following day she left for Paris, and after an interview with the saintly Foundress, went straight to Toulouse to the Novitiate house of the Society of Marie-Réparatrice. On the Feast of the Assumption, 1865, she received the habit, and with it the name she was henceforth to bear, Mary of the Passion. Père Ginhac, the Jesuit, preached. After nine months had passed tranquilly by, there came to Toulouse Mother Mary of St. Joseph, Superior of the Mission at Maduré in India, founded by the Congregation some five years back. She was in search of subjects suited for the missionary life, and Mary of the Passion was among those chosen. She left Toulouse and went to Marseilles.

Before embarking she mounted to the great sanctuary of Notre Dame de la Garde and there took privately her three vows, till such time as the full year of her novitiate should be complete. Thus fortified she embarked for India on March 10, 1866.

CHAPTER II

INDIA AND BEYOND. (1866–1876.)

We now enter upon a period in the life of Mary of the Passion which was to embrace ten years of splendid work and then leave her abruptly "beyond the beyond," immersed suddenly in an unimagined sea of difficulties which long threatened at any moment to engulf and obliterate her, but from which ultimately she was to emerge secure, steeled to great things, like metal from the furnace.

The Society of Marie-Réparatrice had at this time three houses in the Maduré Mission, Trichinopoly in the north, Tuticorin and Adeikalabouram in the south. On her arrival at Trichinopoly, Mary of the Passion was entrusted at once with the delicate work of supervising the native religious, who originally belonged to a local Congregation founded by preceding missioners, but who had been subsequently affiliated to the more formed and stable Congregation from Europe. Successful though she seems

to have been at the work allotted to her, Mary of the Passion was soon assigned to Tuticorin, where in solitude and prayer she prepared herself for her profession.

On May 3, 1867, she pronounced her vows to the sound of guns, not inappropriate presage, fired in her honour at early dawn by natives who had already learned to love her. Two months later she went as Assistant to Adeikalabouram, but by August 5 she was back at Tuticorin, having been appointed Superior of that house at the special request of the Mother Provincial of the Maduré Mission. With co-operation from Superiors and subjects Mother Mary of the Passion threw new life into the mission of Tuticorin, and winning first the hearts, then reached the souls, of the poor pearl-fishers of that coast.

In 1870, when only twenty-nine years of age, Mother Mary of the Passion was appointed by the Mother-General, Provincial of the three houses of the Maduré Mission, with special injunctions to help on to her best, without neglecting the others, the always delicate work of Trichinopoly. The appointment necessitated at least some sort of stay at the latter house, and thither in consequence she directed her steps.

As one reads the life of this valiant woman one cannot be but struck with the impression that here one is face to face with a dominating personality. Chosen, before her novitiate is complete, for the hazardous work of the Indian Missions, appointed Superior within a year of her profession, and then before she is thirty chosen to govern a Province, such a one, surely, had impressed all who knew her, as a religious of outstanding qualities with gifts quite beyond the ordinary. Her success appears to have been immense—an important point to bear in mind in view of what was to occur later; she gathered around her willing supporters; life, energy and tactful direction were poured into the work of Trichinopoly, and the Native sisters, not easy to win, grew absolutely devoted to her. Back at Tuticorin, she is welcomed as an old friend by the *paravers*, or pearl-fishers, who were far from forgetting her. Despite ill-health, which declared itself now in various permanent forms, Mother Mary of the Passion was the life of every work, but everywhere her presence seems to have been *needed*, and old disunions would apparently re-emerge again slowly when the wise, firm hand of this young nun was not actually there to soothe or direct. Anyway, after

spending two or three years at Tuticorin, she was asked by Mgr. Canoz, S.J., Vicar-Apostolic, to return to Trichinopoly. Same result as before—peace and efficiency. Instructions, Retreats, preparation for the Sacraments, dispensaries for the sick, work-rooms for young women, pious societies for aged widows, body and soul both wisely fostered: such in brief was the work of these good sisters, aided as they were by an apostolic clergy.

In 1874 a new foundation, on the Nilgherry hills, in the Vicariate of Coimbatore, is offered to and accepted by Mother Mary of the Passion: welcome change from the stifling heats and lassitude of the plains. On December 8 Mother Mary of St. Veronica and Mother Mary of St. Teresa scaled the mountain of Ootacamund to begin the new foundation. Mother Mary of the Passion followed. In due course a bungalow was bought and transformed, sufficiently, into a Convent. All pointed to a renewal among the hills of the good work done in the plains.

In August, 1876, Mother Mary of the Passion, with twenty of her companions, was sent back into the world, without, however, being dispensed from their vows.

What had happened? Seeing what *has*

happened, one may say at once that so appalling a crisis must have had two currents of causes, divine and human, which met in point of time in August 1876, and in point of person in Mother Mary of the Passion, the leader and guide. The former, like all things of God, is now luminously clear. God would seem—if we may use such *human* expressions—to have wanted a definite work done and a definite Institute founded, and so, with a divine recklessness of which the Pentateuch abounds in examples, does He break through the tortuous network of human weaving, hopes, fears, weaknesses, misunderstandings, prejudice, ambitions and the rest, and triumphantly produces the new without spoiling the old, Marie-Missionaire, Marie-Réparatrice, two aspects of the same Mother, branches from the same vine, workers in the same cause. To a Catholic who knows anything of Catholic history all this is too obvious to need labouring.

What of the human current? Let me in fairness just quote the little so far allowed to be published on this splendid manifestation of God's overruling Providence, as found in the life of the venerable Foundress of the Society of Marie-Réparatrice, by Père Suau, S.J.

After speaking of the good work done by the nuns in the three houses of the Maduré Mission the author (p. 439) continues thus :—

" Entrusted with the religious formation of the native sisters, the Réparatrice nuns devoted themselves to this difficult work with whole-hearted devotion and self-sacrifice. They were often confronted with obstacles, always with suffering; but their courage did not weaken. More than once the arduous task gave rise to painful misunderstandings, which the watchful Enemy of all good skilfully exploited.

" The Vicar-Apostolic of Maduré, Mgr. Alexis Canoz, was the personification of rectitude and sound sense. He was a man of duty and discipline, but, innocent himself of all intrigue, he was incapable of counteracting the intrigues of others. Now, under pretext of furthering the work of the Réparatrice nuns, culpable ambitions were secretly aiming at supplanting the Bishop. The seed of division was sown.

" Assailed with ceaseless reports and complaints, the Mother-General, powerless alike to bring either peace or satisfaction, decided in 1874 to recall her religious. The Mother-Provincial of Maduré had herself demanded

this step. Taken, however, at her word, she pleaded so well in favour of the flourishing *œuvres* of the Mission that the order for leaving was cancelled. The difficulties, however, continued to grow more complex and acute. Two years later, in February, 1876, the Mother-General named a new Provincial to replace the one who had governed the Mission for nine years. The deposed Provincial remained Superior of a house founded in a neighbouring Vicariate. The change was far from being welcomed, and a Visitator was despatched to India. She was met by an organised opposition which resulted in a rupture. Two-thirds of the nuns ranged themselves with the deposed Provincial, and with her declared their intention of founding an independent Institute."

The conclusion, I fancy, is not far to seek. Mother Mary of the Passion and her companions did not really *aim* at founding a new Institute—about all this business she used to say of herself later that " she went forward like a donkey, driven on by blows " : rather, under God, it founded itself long before she ever knelt before Pius IX. A big personality, an isolated mission, special work and a devoted following; then differ-

ences with superiors the other side of the world, growing as they journeyed, a Visitator sent from Europe, irreconcilable divergence, definite parting of the ways, and a gap on both sides which only Time's healing hand can close.

How often has not history the same tale to tell, from Paul and Barnabas down to the days of Bernard and Peter of Cluny, from Savonarola and Rome to the Capuchin Reform or the Jesuit suppression—God smiling down all the while at the good people gesticulating so fiercely *for His greater glory*, and always, when the roaring mouth has grown silent, drawing out therefrom ultimate sweetness?

On November 21, 1876, Mother Mary of the Passion, acting on the advice of her Bishop, began with three companions her journey from India to Rome, leaving the remainder of her following at Ootacamund.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW INSTITUTE. (1877–1884.)

It was in the winter of 1876 that Mother Mary of the Passion and her three companions landed at Naples. Thence they went straight to Rome, where providential influences awaited them. Of her companions one was a de Guigné, who had entered religious life after the death of her husband, leaving two sons in the world. The elder of these had been in the Papal army, and with his brother obtained easy access to Pius IX. They laid the cause of the wanderers before His Holiness. His answer was: "Convey my blessing to them; and now go and see Cardinal Franchi (Prefect of Propaganda), and tell him I should like to confer with him about this affair."

By the Epiphany the clouds had already broken. Piux IX. decided on the foundation of a new Institute to be known as the Missionaries of Mary; the white habit was sanctioned, and permission given to make foundations not merely in the Indian

Vicariate of Coimbatore,[1] but in any diocese where the Bishop gave his approval.

Mother Mary of the Passion set straightway to work. Her first step was to seek an audience herself with him who had so wonderfully set the new bark afloat. "Kiss my feet, but kiss my hands too," the kindly Pius said to her, and then raising his hands he laid them upon her head. Thus encouraged she left Rome, meaning to make a foundation at Bordeaux. So far her only idea was to establish a house in France which should act as feeder for the Indian mission. As yet no vision of the immense spread of the Institute had thrown itself across her gaze. Bordeaux, however, proved a failure. Inimical influences wisely led her to fold up her tents and pass elsewhere. "Do not worry," a country curé said to her; "your Institute will be like an oak, slow to take root, but sturdy in its growth."

It was to Brittany—that land of vigorous faith—that Mother Mary of the Passion turned. A tiny house was offered her at St. Brieuc, in the Rue des Merles. Cordially welcomed by one who throughout was to prove himself a true friend, Mgr. David, the

[1] As early, in fact, as 1878 a second foundation was actually made here, in the town itself of Coimbatore.

Bishop, Mother Mary of the Passion installed herself at St. Brieuc with one companion on April 5, 1877. Shortly afterwards she was joined by the other two, and in poverty and obscurity, but with the Blessed Sacrament in their midst, the first foundation was begun. A novice arrives; money arrives from the brother of the Foundress, and finally death arrives, claiming as firstfruits of the new Institute two of the Community left so far away but never forgotten at Ootacamund, both young, and one still a novice. In that same distant Convent another event took place on April 26 of this momentous year of beginnings. Under the presidence of the Vicar-General a Chapter was held and Mother Mary of the Passion elected Superior-General.

A few weeks later, and Rue des Merles is abandoned for a larger house in the Rue de la Corderie, and the first two postulants are clothed. For two years the quiet work goes forward, shadowed by the Cross. By 1880 a movement is already on foot to sever the connection between St. Brieuc and Ootacamund. Mgr. David, at the time in Rome and noting the impending danger, summons to him Mother Mary of the Passion. The storm passes. Leo XIII grants a Plenary Indulgence to each Missionary on

LES CHÂTELETS

Once the country house belonging to the Bishops of St. Brieuc.

CHÂTEAU DU FORT

Where Helen de Chappotin passed her youth, now a Convent of the Institute.

the day of her departure for the Missions, and, thus rewarded, the Foundress returns to St. Brieuc. Here great changes are soon on foot. Even the larger house in the Rue de la Corderie is found far from sufficient for the growing Community, and in any case, for a Novitiate, the country is better than the town.

As one reads the story of these early days one has the impression of a storm-swept ship, at one time plunging perilously near disaster, at another leaping forward to its goal. Mother Mary of the Passion had just weathered a storm; now an immense opportunity offered itself in the shape of a large estate, about five miles from St. Brieuc — Les Châtelets — and a generous benefactor in M. le Comte d'Erceville. The necessary transactions were satisfactorily completed by September, and the first Mass was celebrated in their new home at the end of the month. Those who to-day visit the house and grounds of Les Châtelets—a hive of activity, life and order—would hardly conceive its state in this autumn of 1880, the grounds a barren and overgrown waste, the mansion windowless and dilapidated. But the necessary enthusiasms were never wanting, and the sisters set themselves energetically to the work of restoration, not indeed the work of a day nor even of a year,

but a long, laborious toil of which the present flourishing state is the splendid result.

Here, indeed, then was an immense step forward—vocations and an established Novitiate. Already the vision of distant fields of labour for her missionary daughters must have begun to take shape in the mind of the Foundress. However, the strengthening sap of threatening disaster was still to cling to the nascent Institute. Mgr. David lay dying, their devoted friend and protector; financial questions—concerning the disputed dowries of those who had passed from Marie-Réparatrice to Marie-Missionaire—still festered like an open wound; Mother Mary of the Passion determined to go to Rome and place her Institute securely under the ægis of one of the great Religious Orders. Early attractions and early reading had long made her Franciscan at heart. She carried then with her to Rome letters of introduction to the Minister-General of the Friars Minor and to the Minister-General of the Capuchins. First she sought out the former, then the latter, but both were away. The slenderest of chances—it would seem to the casual onlooker a mere question of language—brought her into touch with one destined to be a lifelong and powerful support of the Institute,

Father Raphael Delabre, a French Franciscan and, at the time, one of the Definitors-General resident in Rome.

To Father Raphael, then, Mother Mary of the Passion exposed her plan and desire of putting on a sure footing that young Institute of hers, which was already drawing many vocations. "Have you your Constitutions with you?" he asked. Constitutions! why, the Institute still struggles for life, and clings to but a few customs carefully observed. "Let me have them in three days," is the answer. Aghast, but determined, Mother Mary of the Passion sets to work, seats herself in the Amphitheatre amidst the loud-voiced relics, and in three days the work is done. Though, doubtless, the plan and general substance of the Constitutions had often been quietly pondered on and talked over by the Foundress and her daughters, the accomplishment of the work in so short a time remains a lasting monument to her powers of concentration. Shortly afterwards permission was asked to open a house in Rome. Mgr. David was immediately informed by Mother Mary of the Passion of the success so far of her mission, and received from the aged Bishop the following beautiful reply :—

" *July* 8, 1882.

" The happy news from Rome, confirmed by your letter to-day, has been a source of real joy to me despite my incessant pain. I have always striven for this day when the light should appear complete and full.

" How often have I not told you, in the midst of your sorrows, that God was with you, and that you must wait on Divine Providence? It was with you clearly enough in bringing you so unexpectedly into my diocese, and enabling me to see you all at close quarters, so that I could bear witness in your favour, well knowing what I was about.

" Barely six years ago you arrived, three in number, without resources, without shelter, wondering whether the next day would not see you returning on your steps. You have lived in seclusion and obscurity, praying to God and harbouring souls. Groundless prejudices and even attacks have not been wanting. Nevertheless to-day a large family surrounds you, and for the training of your young and numerous novices in silence and solid work you have the most magnificent of homes.

" The protecting arms of the Sacred Con-

gregation of Propaganda will make your future an assured one. For me it will be a profound consolation to see our dear Institute of Missionaries of Mary relieved of those agonising uncertainties which, though they do not destroy its life, certainly cripple it.

" My dear daughter, I would willingly help you more effectively than ever and recommend you again to all those who have your destiny in their hands, but my strength betrays my affections, and I can no longer carry on a wide correspondence. In any case all in Rome to whom I have spoken about you know how much the Bishop of St. Brieuc loves his missionary daughters, and how deeply he esteems the spirit which animates them, their love of peace and charity, and their zeal for the salvation of souls.

" With all my heart I bless you."

At the same time the Bishop sent the following letter to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda :—

" Eminence,—Regretting that my health precludes me from more effectively assisting the Reverend Mother Mary of the Passion

and her two companions, I wish to let your Eminence know that for the last six years I have been witness of the work of the religious, Missionaries of Mary, and each day only serves to increase the esteem and paternal devotion I have for them. They have received quite a number of subjects, of whom several are already on the Mission. Their Novitiate, situated a league away from my episcopal town, satisfies all the conditions necessary for the development of the new Institute, which will, I feel convinced, bear great fruit for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, if there comes in addition, what I hope for and beg of your Eminence, the approbation of the Constitutions which the Institute of the Missionaries of Mary is at this moment soliciting from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda."

On July 27 the desired permission for the Roman house was obtained. That same evening, after living to receive the telegram announcing the fact, Mgr. David, devoted friend of the nuns, died.

On August 8 of this year 1882 the house at Rome began its religious life with five sisters and one postulant, Anne de Geslin. It became immediately the channel of union

between the new Institute and the Order of Friars Minor. On the return to Rome of the Minister-General, Fr. Bernardine of Portogruaro, Fr. Raphael put before him the demands of Mother Mary of the Passion. In substance they were her admission into the Third Order of St. Francis, and the favour of having as Spiritual Director of the Institute Fr. Raphael Delabre. The requests were granted with Franciscan readiness and cordiality. The Foundress thus speaks of the scene: "Very early in the morning of October 4, Mother Mary of St. Veronica and I set out for the Convent of Aracoeli. We went to the Chapel of the Santo Bambino, and there the Very Rev. Fr. Raphael received us into the Third Order. When the ceremony was over the Most Rev. Fr. General arrived and gave us his blessing. I said to him, 'Most Reverend Father, I beg you, receive in me all your children, all the Missionaries of Mary present and to come, bless them, and adopt them as your own.' He spread out his mantle, as though to give me to understand that many would find shelter thereunder, then said to me earnestly: 'Yes, my daughter, I do adopt you, you and all your children present and to come; in the name of St. Francis, I receive you as my

daughter. May God's blessing rest upon you.'"

To complete what was so admirably begun, Mother Mary of the Passion, on the advice of Fr. Bernadine, addressed the following communication to the Pope :—

"For twenty years now I have felt myself drawn to the spirit of St. Francis. Chosen Superior of our young Institute, I have purposed preserving it from worldliness, and imbuing it with the spirit of charity, poverty and evangelical simplicity, by making all its members Tertiaries of the Seraphic Order."

"*Bene, niente di meglio, sono contento e do la benedizione a tutte,*" is Leo's genial answer, "*Good, nothing could be better ; I am quite pleased, and give my blessing to all.*"

Before he would allow Mother Mary of the Passion to communicate all this encouraging news to her children, Fr. Bernardine, the Minister-General, demanded from her an exact account of all the circumstances which had led up to her foundation. He read it, and was completely satisfied. Henceforth she could count on his whole-hearted support and sympathy. On November 19 she

addressed the following letter to her daughters :—

" From the time your souls were entrusted to my care, I have always aimed at preserving you from the spirit of the world, and leading you back to that of the Gospel. From that spirit the world is every day withdrawing itself more and more, and so I would aim at setting up between you and it a barrier it cannot pass. From the day the Institute came into my charge, it has seemed to me that this result would be achieved by leaning up our work, so young and as yet so inexperienced, against one of the greatest religious families in God's Church, the Order of the Seraphic Francis of Assisi.

" Besides the Gospel spirit which inclined me to this quarter, I also saw the advantage of assuring for the members of the Institute far more numerous and considerable Indulgences than are usually conceded nowadays to modern Congregations. I have never meant to withdraw the Institute from its special Mission, nor alter its own peculiar character, much less to tamper with our constitutions; but each one of us may, by entering into the Third Order of St. Francis, participate in the spirit and spiritual

treasures of this Order without in any way prejudicing our duties as Missionaries of Mary or involving the Institute in any sort of vital modification.

"I have long delayed making this appeal to you. As far as I am personally concerned, it goes back several years. It is twenty-two years since our Lord deigned to show me the beauty of holy poverty and Gospel simplicity so proper to St. Francis of Assisi. If I have waited so long in making my choice, it is because I wanted to find out more certainly the will of God. What decided me is the Encyclical of His Holiness Leo XIII, in which he invites all, pastors and flock, to enrol themselves among the followers of the Poor Man of Assisi, that, in his spirit of charity and detachment, the world may find that regeneration of which it stands in such great need.

"I feel sure, my children, that the words of His Holiness, joined to your Mother's appeal, will find you pleased and ready. After all, what pleases the Pope must surely be pleasing to us as well!

"I cannot finish without saying a word to you about the Most Reverend Fr. General of the Friars Minor. Our affiliation to the Third Order rested of course with him. The

first opportunity I had of kneeling before him was on October 4, Feast of the Centenary of St. Francis of Assisi. As I approached him, I felt at once he would be a Father to me who would never fail. One feels at ease in presence of this true son of St. Francis. Not the spirit of the world, but this spirit of the Gospel is what I so much desire to see in you, what I ask so earnestly for you from Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and what I shall demand for each one of you at the feet of St. Francis of Assisi."

This appeal was received by everyone so cordially that it immediately had all the force of a definite decision. As far as the Roman house was concerned, the whole community was received into the Third Order on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8. The ship was now ready for the storm.

The success of the new house at Rome had once more drawn attention and hostility to the new Institute. Vague insinuations against the whole movement gradually crystallised themselves into a demand, not apparently for suppression, but for the resignation of the Foundress, Mother Mary of the Passion. Her constant support throughout

these naturally immense trials lay in the unwavering confidence in her, and the practical help of the Minister-General, Fr. Bernardine. "They want you to resign?" he wrote. "Answer them thus: When our Saviour was on the Cross He was invited to come down. He would not, but waited to be taken down. Allow me to imitate this Divine Model. At this actual moment I cannot in conscience resign the heavy responsibilities that lie on me, I wait to be deposed." This was in December, 1882. In the following January the Community of the Roman house was, by order of the ecclesiastical authorities, reduced to four and forbidden to admit new subjects. In March, Mother Mary of the Passion was debarred from all further communication with any of her daughters outside Rome. This was practical deposition, yet oddly enough no successor was appointed. Anne de Geslin, the postulant, refuses to leave her suffering Foundress, though due at Les Châtelets to receive the habit. Fr. Bernardine bids her lay her ring of office at the feet of our Lady's statue. She does so, and installs herself in a little corner of the chapel. The days pass, strangely uncertain, none knowing what the morrow will bring forth. Days of bitter sorrow for the Foun-

dress. She seems to be assisting at a death-bed, watching the work die, as of old she had watched over the last days of her dying mother. Then it was another; now she herself is sinking with her Institute. In the early spring Fr. Bernardine leaves Rome for Spain and Portugal, taking Fr. Raphael with him. The void is complete; the friends who had done so much, distant at last; only their letters remain an immense help.

Then in May of this year 1883 came the most unlooked-for intervention. Cardinal Lavigerie was in Rome, and had heard already of the Missionaries of Mary. He went to see the Foundress. "Leave Rome," he said to her, "come and establish your Mother-House in Tunis: I shall take your cause up." One wonders at the kindness of such an offer made at such a time to a community very much under a cloud, but one is aghast at the courageous audacity of the refusal. Here was her whole work in jeopardy, herself as good as deposed, and yet she refuses the protection and helping hand of one of the most distinguished Cardinals of the Church. However, she was right. Whatever may have been thought at the time, it is clear now that to have left Rome then would have been to cripple her work

beyond repair, almost to stand self-condemned. No—Rome was to be the centre: she was still waiting to be turned out. Luckily the Cardinal was not one on whom a display of such grim determination would be lost, much less was he one to take offence. Alluring though his offer was, he must have realised before long that the Foundress was right, and, far from allowing his interest to cool, he continued to the end both an admirer of Mother Mary of the Passion and, as we shall see, a practical helper in her work.

In July the Roman community moved into a little house in the Via Giusti, which they had recently been able to buy. The same month saw one acute difficulty settled, if not disposed of. The repayment of the disputed dowries was laid as a charge upon the Missionaries of Mary. Then followed the long summer and autumn of 1883, and Christmas came, and still no relief. For a year now Mary had ruled the Roman house, and the Superior's place was still empty, and Mother Mary of the Passion still knelt in corners of the Chapel apart, and sat awkwardly enough in the Refectory, for none would precede her. But now at length, with the opening of the year 1884, the end of this long-drawn agony was approaching. The

mantle of Mgr. David of St. Brieuc had fallen upon Mgr. Bouché, and with it all the active interest in the Missionaries of Mary that had characterised his predecessor. The Bishop made his first *ad limina* visit to Rome in February, 1884. He took the opportunity of begging the Pope to re-open again the whole question of Mother Mary of the Passion and her Institute. For himself, he said, he was convinced of the falseness of the rumours that had led to the present abnormal position of the Foundress. As a result, the case was re-opened, and during the month of March the whole position of Mother Mary of the Passion and her work was passed in review by the Holy Office, and, after meticulous sifting of evidence, finally approved. By April Mother Mary of the Passion had been given back to her daughters, and the autonomy of the Institute definitely recognised.

None rejoiced more at this happy issue than Fr. Bernardine, the Minister-General.

"I send you my poor cord," he wrote, "St. Francis will reward your trust and confident devotion. In his name I bless you and the whole Institute, and recommend myself to your prayers."

The storm had passed at length and the

ship had weathered it. Other trials would come, no doubt, but never again would the Institute run such a hazard as that of 1883. Yet were these days of grace. Hardly can we imagine a more appropriate pledge of security during the almost unparalleled expansion of the next twenty years than the memory of these months of obscure suffering which yet were to be the prelude to so much. It would seem that such quasi-extinction were somehow necessary to safeguard the splendours in store.

In May Mother Mary of the Passion left Rome for Les Châtelets, which had been fixed on as the meeting-place of the forthcoming Chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FOUR CONTINENTS

When Mother Mary of the Passion left Les Châtelets for Rome in 1882, the community there was growing rapidly; now on her return in 1884 she was greeted by fifty novices. In Brittany no sombre cloak of affliction had shrouded God's blessings as at Rome, but they had come openly, for all to measure and grasp. To Les Châtelets then came Mother Mary of the Passion, bringing to her children the longed-for assurance of stability. The Institute to which God had called them, whilst she in Rome was still working for its very life, was now established beyond question. She brought them also *herself*, with all her energy, charm, organising powers and the immense gift of sane discretion. She saw at once the work that had to be done: fifty novices—the whole future lay there; fifty to be imbued with the Franciscan and missionary spirit, and trained for their future work. The Institute, which still rested upon her, would soon—and more

securely—rest upon them. Yet she could not *live* at Les Châtelets; her duties would certainly be for ever calling her elsewhere; upon others must devolve the work of training. What, however, she could do, and did, was during these early summer days of 1884 to impress upon this Convent in Brittany a spirit it would not easily lose or forget. She became the very soul of Les Châtelets, inspiring all by her regularity, piety and charity, helping all by her advice and guidance. The stones still cry out. It is no mere fancy that hallowed memories and place associations stamp with their subtle influences not merely the later and perhaps forgetful dwellers there, but even the very buildings themselves.

Among those whom Mother Mary of the Passion received this year to the habit was the faithful Anne de Geslin, who becomes Marie de Ste. Hélène. Already a cousin of hers is in the Institute. Before long the latter's three sisters—orphans—present themselves before the Foundress, and are accepted. So the Institute grows.

On July 26 the Chapter was held. It was presided over by Mgr. Bouché of St. Brieuc. Representatives were there from distant Ootacamund. Mother Mary of the

CLOISTERS OF THE MOTHER HOUSE AT ROME

Passion was unanimously re-elected Superior-General. She approached the Bishop and knelt before him, and the ring of office which for nearly two years had lain at the feet of Mary's statue in the house at Rome was now at length restored to her.

Shortly afterwards the Foundress went to Lourdes, visiting her old home by Nantes, and the Abbess of the Poor Clares. At Lourdes she begged the gift of health from Mary Immaculate. It was denied her. She returned to Les Châtelets, but hearing that the cholera had broken out alarmingly in Italy she hastened to join her community in Rome. It was feared the scourge might reach the city, and, in answer to a general appeal, Mother Mary of the Passion offered herself and her daughters for the work of succouring the diseased. Luckily there was no need.

Though constantly away visiting the various Provinces or arranging for new foundations, Rome was henceforth to be the chief residence of Mother Mary of the Passion. For several years the Convent remained unaltered, and not till it became insufferably too small, with the Foundress herself almost crowded out with the unfinished products of the various workrooms filling every vacant

corner, were alterations and large extensions begun.

On December 8, 1884, Mother Mary of the Passion addressed a circular letter to her daughters exhorting them to devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to Mary Immaculate.

A feature of primary importance in the lives of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary is the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Every day, in every house of the Institute throughout the world, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed each morning and the sisters in turn watch before the Divine Presence till the evening Benediction. Few souls can resist the influences that emanate from our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Vocal prayers may be neglected, the Divine Office may be hurried, meditation omitted, and thus will the " hardening " of a soul begin : yet twenty minutes or half an hour spent before the Blessed Sacrament enthroned, will surely suffice to thaw away that hardness and leave the soul once more sensitive to the gentle inspirations of God's grace. Now, from the very nature of things, an active missionary life means the absence of many safeguards, and the presence of many dangers. In fixing on the daily exposition and adora-

tion of the Blessed Sacrament, Mother Mary of the Passion counteracted, in the most effective of ways, that necessary feature of the missionary life. It binds the Institute together in a way that nothing else could. Always there are those who pray and those who work; but, unlike the Gospel story, the rôle is being constantly reversed: those who watch before the Blessed Sacrament are fortifying themselves for labour in store, and those who work are working with a memory of prayer behind them and a vision of prayer to come. What is true of every convent is even more literally true of the whole Institute, for at each hour of the twenty-four it rejoices in those who adore the Blessed Sacrament and in those who are busy over their missionary work—its Marys and its Marthas; and it is surely this mingling of two streams of activity that has given to the Institute its wonderful strength and vitality.

Mother Mary of the Passion spent the winter of 1884 in Rome preparing the Constitutions for the final approval of *Propaganda*, and in fixing definitely the *Coutumier* or *Customs* of the Institute.

On August 12, 1885, the Constitutions received the usual preliminary Decree of *praise*, and at the same time the Sacred Congregation

granted officially to the Foundress the long-desired favour of being, with her entire Institute, placed directly under the spiritual guidance of the General of the Friars Minor. Writing from Paris on August 30, Fr. Bernardine, in his own name and that of his successors, officially accepted the charge in accordance with the tenor of the Decree. Henceforth they were to be known as Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

In the same summer of 1885 Fr. Bernardine paid his first visit to Les Châtelets, whither Mother Mary of the Passion had preceded him to prepare a welcome. The seraphic blessing was given to the entire foundation, the living stones and the material edifice both receiving their share, and in the memory of the paternal bounty of that visit one more link was forged binding the new Institute to the old Order.

From now onwards foundations follow one another in almost bewildering succession. Marseilles, it is true, had been founded earlier in the year. It was to be a sort of "jumping-off" point for the Missionaries, though other work, notably a maritime orphanage, was carried on there. The first Mass was said by Fr. Raphael in the Convent Chapel on April 11.

Convent at Coimbatore, India, founded in 1878

Here is a brief outline of the first wave of activity which literally reached four continents during the lifetime of the Foundress, and which has since developed still more.

In February, 1886, the first Franciscan Missionaries of Mary set out for the Eastern Missions. The new foundation was to be at Moratuwa, near Colombo. After an enthusiastic welcome at the capital from both clergy and natives, the sisters proceeded to their residence some distance out, "a little rustic house with a low roof, hidden among palm trees and facing the sea." The work of catechising began at once, and now the palm-groves shelter a veritable village, schools, orphanage, workrooms, dispensary. In the following year, the Vicar-General acting as intermediary, the English Government asked for the Missionaries of Mary to undertake the charge of the big hospital in Colombo itself. Naturally a demand like that, and for so fitting a work, brooked no refusal, and in May, 1887, the Foundress watched the sisters for Colombo embarking at Marseilles. In May, 1888, India offered a third home to the daughters of Mother Mary of the Passion. The Portuguese Archbishop of Mylapore was insistent in his demands, and, with the approbation of

Propaganda, a house was founded there. The sisters began by opening a much-needed dispensary. Incredible the work thereof, interminable the streams of human affliction wending their way for solace to the White Nuns' home; fifteen hundred a day, we are told was normal, on one occasion the number topped three thousand. Lourdes water—we are hardly surprised—must needs serve, *ad tempus*, and not ineffectually, till more medicaments arrive of human devising. To-day Meliapour, with its school, orphanage and home for the aged, shelters more than three hundred and fifty persons.

From India the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary passed into the even wider horizons of China. In April, 1886, a party, detached from Ootacamund, reached Chefu in Western Shantung. Here no flourishing welcome as in Ceylon, nor immediate success as at Meliapour, but very modest and obscure beginnings. Not till Mother Mary of the Passion obtained from the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris a site belonging to the French Government did the Chefu Mission really prosper, with its orphanage, home for catechumens, European school and the rest. In 1890 a house was opened at Tung-yuen-fang in Northern Shen-si, and at Tsingtau

in the same year the sisters opened a school and hospital. The next Foundation was at I-Chang, in the province of Hu-pe, where the sisters, after weathering an anti-European outbreak, finally established themselves in 1891. The house at Tai-yuen in Shan-si was not founded till 1898. Mère Marie Hermine was the first superior, of whom more later.

If we pass from Asia to Africa, there is the same story of foundations multiplying themselves like centres of divine life midst heathen desolation. In 1895 the famous Cardinal Lavigerie, already interested, as we have seen, summoned the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary to North Africa. Not without tears did the Convent of St. Monica rise amongst the ruins of Carthage. In the stillness of an African night Mother Mary of St. Cecilia bathed the fevered brow of her Superior and only companion, Mother Mary of the Holy Ghost, that very day struck down by sickness. Nothing in the house but the bed on which lay the dying nun, a table and chair, some few medicines and some bread. Day brought none of its wonted charities. Mother Mary of St. Cecilia dared not leave, yet none appeared to bear a message; the day wore slowly on: evening at length brought help from the outside world in the

shape of a visit from a sister of the Bon Secours, blessed name, and all was well. Once her state was known, kindness of every sort was showered upon Mother Mary of the Holy Ghost. Attended by the White Fathers of Lavigerie, who himself had visited her, this first victim of charity peacefully died. To-day, besides the house in Tunis, there are houses of the Institute at St. Margaret and St. Clement.

Down into the Continent the Missionaries of Mary penetrate to the Congo. Cardinal Goosens of Malines was the first to summon them. Already he had welcomed them to Antwerp. Now, to provide for the Congo Mission, a special house was opened at Gooreind near Antwerp. Then, in 1896, the first Missionaries left for New Antwerp, five hundred miles from the coast, and only to be reached through perils of water and wild beasts, torrential rapids and dangerous forests. To-day the Missionaries of Mary have seven houses in the Congo Belge and a house at Beira in Mozambique. Yet further south they come. A year before her death Mother Mary of the Passion sent seven of her daughters to Natal for future work among the Zulus.

Canada welcomed the Franciscan Mission-

aries of Mary in 1892, when a house was opened at Quebec, Rue Richelieu. Later, as Canadian generosity and appreciation made themselves felt still more widely, a splendid home was built on an eminence overlooking the St. Lawrence. Besides serving a multitude of *œuvres*, this house became a Novitiate whence, before the death of the Mother Foundress, one hundred and fifty Canadians had passed into the Institute. Houses soon followed elsewhere, one at St. Anne de Beaupré and another in distant Manitoba, like New Antwerp, reached not without difficulty and adventure. As in Africa, so now, before Mother Mary of the Passion died her daughters had penetrated south into the States, and had by 1903 houses in Boston and Woonsocket.

"We are asked for on every side," she wrote in July, 1899. "Numerous though we are, there are not enough of us;" and, later, "The Missions devour us; the more we send out, the more we are wanted."

Needless to say, this unprecedentedly rapid growth of Missionary houses could not go unaccompanied by a proportionate deepening of the roots in Europe. Trace for a moment the growth and labours of the Institute here. "No reaching the people," wrote Mother

Mary of the Passion, " except by the way of work. . . . First provide work, then you can get into touch, and the real mission begins. We must first win their hearts by taking an interest in them, and by helping them and directing them in their work. Then we shall be able to instruct them and lead them to God." Almost every house in Europe was to have workrooms attached to it, a professional school, where young girls and women could receive technical instruction useful for the future.

Paris, though a little later than Marseilles, may fitly head the list. In September, 1886, Mother Mary of the Passion reached the city, and asked from Mgr. Richard, Co-adjutor of Cardinal Guibert, permission to open a house in the capital. He welcomed the proposal and suggested the possibility of making a beginning in the centre of Paris, in a house recently placed at his disposition. The following day the Curé of St. Marcel—unaware of her negotiations with the Coadjutor,—offered her a modest home in his parish in the very poor district of La Glacière. This was more to her mind, and it was here that, in truly Franciscan poverty, was begun the Convent at Paris. Huysmans, as the *Durtal* of " ***En Route***," confesses that it was

Novitiate, Grottaferrata, near Rome

in the lowly Chapel of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary that he experienced, as he listened to the *monotonous amplitude* of the chant, one of those strange waves of religious emotion which were ultimately to lead him back to the light. In 1896 the community moved to a larger house in the Impasse Reille, where all the *œuvres* of La Glacière were developed on an even larger scale.

Vanves, outside Paris, was opened in 1889. San Giacinto di Lota in Corsica in 1894, Lyons in 1900, Mane (Basses-Alpes) in 1894. In Italy, houses sprang up at Assisi, Turin, Florence, Grottaferrata. Taormina, in Sicily, received the Sisters in 1902—then, Sicilian-wise, raised a great tumult against them, so that human prudence bade them begone. Mother Mary of the Passion bade them stay, and for two whole years they lived in idle seclusion in a tower. They came down to find the fields white for the harvest. In 1914 more than two hundred children worked under the direction of the sisters.

In Spain a foundation was made at Pamplona in Navarre. For long Mother Mary of the Passion had wished for a home in Spain, and to be able to number Spaniards among

her children, but she knew how to wait on Providence, and it was not till 1900 that her desires were ultimately fulfilled.

Of Portugal only a memory remains. For fifteen years the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary laboured there and their works developed. Then in 1910 the Revolution swept all away, except only one thing—the hope of ultimate return.

England saw the nuns arriving in 1887, first at Clevedon in Somersetshire, then in London, where Cardinal Vaughan welcomed them and fixed them among the poor in the parish of St. Margaret, Canning Town. In May, 1897, Cardinal and Foundress met in Rome. " He has all the splendid appearance of Cardinal Lavigerie," she wrote, " but more gentleness and charm of manner."

In Ireland the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary made a foundation in 1903; at Loughlynn in the diocese of Elphin they have a school of housekeeping, and workrooms where carpets and lace are made.

Belgium, with Antwerp, Brussels and Woluwe at the gates of the capital; Holland with Acht and Grathem; Switzerland, with the nuns installed at Fribourg in a *quondam* meeting-place of Freemasons, whose emblems may still be seen cut in stone over what are

now the Chapel doors—so the tale goes forward, everywhere foundations.

In 1898 Mother Mary of the Passion is at Vienna and has an audience with the Emperor. Already her daughters are in the Tyrol, at Roveredo: now, near Vienna, rises the beautiful Convent and Novitiate of the Annunziata, and another foundation is made at Budapest.

As one follows this mere list of names—itself, I expect, incomplete—one should, I think, bear in mind that, apart from such special work as pertains to houses of Novitiate and training centres for Missionaries, the main purpose everywhere of the Institute is not so much to solace and heal as to train, develop and teach. It is the old story of *prevention better than cure*, and it sums up the theory of apostolate of the Missionaries of Mary in Europe. Before her death the Foundress literally left Europe dotted with houses in which true *Social Reform* is never taught, and, I suppose, seldom mentioned, but simply "worked at."

Already by the year 1890 the Institute numbered 495 members dispersed among seventeen houses, wherein over 253,000 souls were in various ways cared for or brought up. Legitimately might Mother

Mary of the Passion reflect: . . . "On the Epiphany fourteen years ago, when, abandoned and poor I came to Rome, I had four daughters with me; now I have four hundred. How wonderfully has God acted. His alone is the work. It looks as though He sacrificed me for the love of others; that He wanted me to go through every kind of sorrow and danger in order to keep the Missionaries He wanted to establish. May God use me as He wills."

On July 17, 1890, Propaganda approved the Constitution for five years *ad experimentum*. The *experimentum* proved successful beyond all imagining. Mother Mary of the Passion knew how to work in intension as well as extension, and, though the houses and works of the Institute multiplied so rapidly, the exterior spirit of the nuns was not allowed to spend and dissipate itself without, but rather grew deeper in proportion under the wise direction of the Foundress.

On May 11, 1896, the Institute of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary was definitely approved at Rome. The Foundress immediately announced the fact in a circular letter. "How great the goodness of God," she exclaimed, "to allow me after so many years of toil and tears to witness

the consecration of this work. . . . But the gift of the Lord is as much to you as to me. Make yourselves wholly worthy ! . . . ."

There followed, in November, the second General Chapter of the Institute. It was held at Rome. Mother Mary of the Passion was again unanimously elected Superior-General. Provinces were re-arranged and, in view of recent foundations, four new ones erected. In an address to the Roman community, after the Chapter, the Foundress admirably sums up her counsels by bidding all take to themselves the words of St. Peter to the Blind Man, in the *Acts : Arise and walk.* It is the burden of her discourse—so much to be shaken off *before* we can rise, and only when we have risen may we hope to begin to walk towards Christ. " Get rid of self-seeking and all human attachments, and follow our Lord."

Before leaving this account of the spread of the Institute let us pause briefly at two notable landmarks in its history, its Martyrs in China, and its work among Lepers.

As for the former the occasion was the famous revolt of the Boxers in 1900. Because those who should have maintained order apparently favoured the spread of the

insurrection, the chaos naturally deepened with impunity. In the June of that year the Chinese Governor of Chan-si issued an edict bluntly ordering apostasy from the Christian faith under pain of death. A few days later, at Tai-yuen, he seized and imprisoned the Vicar-Apostolic, Mgr. Grassi, his Coadjutor, Mgr. Fogolla, three Franciscans—Fr. Elias, Fr. Theodoricus and Brother Andrew Bauer —and seven Missionaries of Mary, who a year or so back had opened a convent in the town, and who had valiantly rejected proposals of flight in disguise made them whilst there was yet time.[1] On July 9, soldiers and populace broke into the prison, dragged the thirteen Christians before some sort of tribunal, went through a form of trial, and then simply massacred them, the Bishops and Friars first, and then without delay the seven sisters, who with splendid courage were waiting their turn.

One sometimes hears it said that these valiant men and women were just victims of an anti-European movement. Without meaning in the least to forestall the judgment of the Church, it is surely clear that, however much anti-European feeling entered into the Boxer movement, these

[1] For the names, etc., of the sisters, see note at the end of this chapter.

thirteen Europeans *died* for being Christians. Amateurs who lightly assume the weighty responsibilities of *Advocatus Diaboli* may allege to their hearts' content that these good priests and nuns were spreading French and Italian influences in China. It is, in fact, hard to see how it could be otherwise. Every "national" in foreign surroundings cannot help being a centre, however tiny, of national influences. Whatever political *animus* may have been in the air against them, whatever national influences they may, even consciously, have been endeavouring to spread when *living*, it is beyond dispute they could have gone on living—whether in China or elsewhere—had they chosen to renounce their faith. This they refused to do, and were *martyred*—surely—in consequence.

As soon as the news was established beyond doubt, Mgr. Rinaldo Angeli—one of the personal secretaries of Leo XIII—wrote thus to the Mother-General: "His Holiness has heard with deep emotion the news of the martyrdom of seven of your religious family in China; and he blesses most heartily the Institute which has brought forth these pure victims. Allow me to congratulate you on this new pledge of God's favour towards your Society."

Cardinal Ferrata wrote in similar strain

"I wish to unite myself to your joy and to your sorrow. Happy the seven martyrs. Happy the Institute which formed them and prepared them for this splendid and heroic victory. We mourn their loss, yet in our heart rejoice. The blood of your daughters, shed in the noblest of causes, will fall like dew from Heaven upon your beloved Congregation, and double its fruitfulness."

Naturally enough Mother Mary of the Passion was immensely affected by the news. "I cannot tell you," she wrote, "the impression this thought makes on me, that I am the mother of seven martyrs." And again: "Since my great trials I have carried by night and by day a weight of sorrow in my heart. I will not say it is gone, but still there is a feeling within me now which makes me rejoice. It seems to me that henceforth between Heaven and myself there is some bond of union which, though I could not explain it, is none the less real."

"Oh, my daughter," she wrote in the following year, "how good God is, and how splendid and merciful are His dealings with us! The holocaust of Tai-yuen, which pierces my heart like a sword, still causes me an immense and wonderful joy. I feel no longer that my hands are empty before

God. Now I can offer Him my seven martyred daughters, especially dear Marie Hermine, whose holiness becomes all the more splendidly apparent to me—brilliant and worthy of her name—the more I study it."

Before the year was out the splendid official announcement of the martyrdom was made in a circular letter to the whole Institute. She bids her daughters join to legitimate pride in the honour God has done them, the resolution to imitate the virtues of those whom He has taken; may the memory of them bind the Institute together and preserve it from the spirit of disunion: "Study Jesus: when you know Him more perfectly you will be unable to keep yourselves from giving Him your heart. . . . Fight the good fight, obedience is the school of love."

Hardly less glorious is the account of the work of the Institute among the Lepers. The first demand came from Père Wehinger of the Foreign Missions, founder of the leper hospital of St. John at Mandalay in Northern Burma. In 1896 he was in Europe seeking help, personal and pecuniary, for his work. To win Mother Mary of the Passion was an easy task, in fact no task at all, for she welcomed whole-heartedly the proposal. She

wrote throughout the Institute for volunteers. She had to choose the seven sisters she needed out of the thousand and more names that reached her as the result of her appeal. In December, 1897—after a special audience with Pope Leo XIII—the seven Franciscan Missionaries of Mary upon whom the Superior's choice had fallen for this splendid work sailed from Trieste.

They reached Mandalay in January of the following year, and were welcomed by Père Wehinger and his suffering flock—suffering, yet strangely gay.

From the sisters straightway flowed out upon these outcasts of humanity, not indeed the healing touch, but that gentle handling and kindly sympathy and ready attention which can only spring from hearts consumed already with love for that Divine Heart in whose embrace both the strong and the leper meet. The divine charity of the sisters on which their human devotion rested could not but make its influence felt, and in many a crumbling body the soul grew up to " life."

The same year that witnessed the Mandalay Foundation saw a second made at Kemmendine near Rangoon, where Père Freynet had gathered a leper colony together; and a

third in far-away Japan, at Kumamoto in the Province of Nangazaki, already hallowed by Franciscan memories and watered with martyrs' blood. Here in Japan the sisters were welcomed by Père Corre, who placed at their disposal a little Japanese house of paper and wood—from which fragile beginnings the enduring influences went forth.

In June, 1900, the French Government, on the initiative of their own officials, authorised the entry of the Missionaries of Mary into Madagascar, to take charge of the big leper hospital of Tananarivo. Here for six years among 600 lepers the good work went forward with results of the happiest, both spiritual and material. Then, in 1907, the French Government turned the sisters out. Comment on these strange vagaries of anti-clericalism is needless. One wonders whether counsel had been taken beforehand with any of the 600 lepers.

Martyrs who died for the faith, martyrs who lived for the lepers, it comes almost as a shock to find Mother Mary of the Passion grouping in the same great company the "pedlar" martyrs.

Many readers must have seen them—some perhaps with grave disapproval—those sisters

in grey mantles, offering their little wares for sale—the products of their various work-rooms. Yet Mary of the Passion was right. It is no easy thing for human nature to beg—as even St. Francis found to his cost; but, after all, there is a dignity in the mendicant which the hawker lacks; and when the Foundress sent her daughters not merely to beg, but to sell—not indeed an unreasonable way of helping to provide the necessary resources for the Institute—she knew human nature well enough to see she was asking from her children a real sacrifice, and imposing upon many of them a real martyrdom of self.

NOTE ON THE MARTYRS IN CHINA.

Here are a few details about these seven sisters :—

Mother Marie Hermine of Jesus, Superior, a Frenchwoman, born in 1866 at Beaune, in the diocese of Dijon; entered the Institute in 1894.

Mother Mary of Peace, Assistant, an Italian, born in 1875; entered the Institute in 1891.

Mother Mary Clare, likewise an Italian, born in 1872; entered the Institute in 1892.

Sister Mary of St. Nathalia, from Brittany, born in 1864; entered the Institute in 1887.

Sister Mary of St. Just, born at Nantes in 1866; entered the Institute in 1890.

Sister Mary Adolphine, born at Ossendrecht in Holland, in 1869; entered the Institute in 1893.

Sister Mary Amandine, born at Hasselt in the diocese of Liège in 1872; entered the Institute in 1895.

CHAPTER V

CHARACTER AND WRITINGS

If one reads a *life*, not a mere sketch like this, of Mother Mary of the Passion—and for that one must still turn to the French—one certainly gets the impression, already noted, of being face to face with a *personality*, a woman of great strength of character, grim determination, and an immense power of foreseeing and wide organisation. She had the capacity—a gift rather than an acquirement—of fashioning others to her mind; and though it is, perhaps, too soon to say such influences will always last, it is at least true to say that so far the Institute continues undeviatingly to follow the lines laid down for it by the Foundress. As far as Europe was concerned she was almost ubiquitous. There was hardly a house which she did not personally visit. This is a most vital point. The bigger the Order, the greater is the need of what to many often appears mere gratuitous travelling. Personal presence is everything, if ideals are to be

maintained. Then by her letters—personal and official—and by her various other writings she reinforced and sought to give permanence to her spoken words and unseen influences. It was by these means also that she reached the many houses which perforce—with such sudden expansion—she was herself unable to visit.

Of greatest value among all her writings, so it seems to me, is the *Coutumier* of the Institute, drawn up in separate parts for the Mistress of Novices, the Local Superior and the Mother-Provincial. *Constitutions* of course have their value, but they are legal documents, embodying much Canon Law, enjoining this and forbidding that, impregnated throughout with the cold formalism of the law. Centralisation of authority and great attention to the spiritual life of the sisters would seem to mark the Constitutions of the Institute. A *Coutumier*, on the other hand, is a *living* document, and, once the laws are known and kept, of much more personal value. If this is true in general, it is most certainly true of that which has been left her daughters by Mother Mary of the Passion.

Whilst staying at a convent of the Institute, I was privileged to be able to read the *Coutumier*, which concerns the Mistress

of Novices. Having taken it up, I found it hard to lay it down. It came as a veritable revelation. Hitherto, I must confess, Mother Mary of the Passion has seemed to clothe her letters and exhortations to her daughters in what we in England are accustomed to speak of, somewhat deprecatingly, as the *French* style, meaning by that a style that is flowery and gently indicative rather than pointedly direct. That there must have been more behind, one should have been prepared to expect, seeing the wonderful work she did. Here in the *Coutumier* one finds it. Nowhere have I ever read a more detailed and practical manual of spiritual training. As I followed the direction of souls by the pen of this gifted leader and guide I found myself thinking aloud, " Why, this is almost brutal in its cold and deliberate laying bare of the hidden faults and weaknesses that beset our frail humanity ! " I was reminded of a surgeon I once watched preparing, with remorseless deliberation and calm, to perform a very vital and complicated operation, and then carrying it through to a most successful conclusion. There is nothing flowery here, nor gently soothing, but the most frank and unspoken recognition of the faults that, in some measure or other,

beset us all, and the most wise and practical suggestions for controlling and in time eradicating them. Where all is so good it is invidious to select and meaningless to quote mere fragments, but one must just say that the sections dealing with temptations, scruples, and discouragement strike the reader as most extraordinarily true and most wisely practical. To read the *Coutumier* is to see those roots of strength whence the Institute is ever growing, to understand a little the mystery of its unprecedented development, which might have made one fear for its stability, or at least its unity, did one not see it grounded on so rigorous and complete a training; above all it gives one more than anything else an insight into the character and discernment of that saintly woman to whom, under God, the Institute owes its creation.

Next to the *Coutumier*, in point of value, I should certainly place the Foundress's really monumental work in five volumes—one wonders where she found the time—*Méditations Liturgiques et Franciscaines.* These *Méditations* are meant for the everyday life of all, offering, without distinction of place or office, a uniform spiritual guidance and nourishment. For arrangement they

were mainly based upon the offices and feasts of the Franciscan Breviary, as in use during the lifetime of the Foundress. They were meant to supply, as far as might be, what the sisters necessarily miss in not reciting daily the full Divine Office of the Church. As Missionaries the Divine Office could hardly find place in their lives, but here in these *Méditations* they may find a complete cycle of reflections and prayers for every day of the year, calculated to fashion them all along those broad lines of faith and charity and Franciscan poverty and detachment which characterised their holy Foundress and Mother. Each meditation concludes, not with a new resolution, but with one or other most practical admonition. There can be no doubt at all that an Order gains immense stability by strict uniformity of training and subsequent similarity of spiritual influences. This may seem a commonplace sufficiently obvious, but in reality there are Orders which differ widely in this respect, as may be seen from the fact that, broadly speaking, some turn out their subjects *all of a piece*, as we might say, whereas in others may be met an immense variety of outlook and ideal. The course of the latter might be tracked, like a fever chart, in ups and downs; of the

former by a level line. From the business point of view there can be no question as to which is preferable and more efficient, but after all, Religious Orders are not *solely* concerned with mundane efficiency, and precisely when the *downs* have been deep, the *ups* are often found high and splendid indeed, and far beyond what the level lines might ever lead to.

Be this, however, as it may, it would seem that Mother Mary of the Passion certainly wished her family of the future to walk straight along the fashioned lines of her own most wise devising, and for this very purpose left to her daughters those invaluable writings of hers we now possess. Not merely, then, her letters, *Coutumier* and *Méditations*, but her Lives also of Franciscan Saints like Antony of Padua, Paschal and Leopold, the account of her own spiritual daughters, the martyred Mère Marie Hermine and her companions, and other small devotional works are meant to, and do, convey to the Institute not simply facts in the lives of others, but the very spirit and enthusiasm of her own.

Of importance also as linking the Institute together from the start and penetrating all with the missionary spirit, was the serial

publication of the *Annals*, begun in 1887. It gave in simple, pleasing form an account of the daily lives of the missionaries in the various houses of the Institute, their successes and failures, hardships and joys. The first number appeared at Marseilles, but the *Bureau des Annales* was soon transferred to Paris. For several years the indefatigable Foundress was the mainstay of the periodical, contributing thereto many reminiscences of her own thirteen years of missionary life in India. Welcomed—from its first appearance—both within and outside the Institute, the *Annals* has continued its useful career to the present day.

The organisation of the Institute is briefly as follows. The *personnel* is divided into Choir-nuns and Lay-sisters. The houses also receive *aggregées*, Tertiaries of St. Francis, who, while not technically nuns or religious, devote themselves nevertheless to helping on its work. The postulantship of the nuns lasts for six months and the novitiate for two years, after which simple vows are taken for three years. Perpetual vows are taken after the three years. The government of the Institute is vested in a Superior-General who, together with her Council, is elected at the General Chapter for twelve years.

The Order is divided into Provinces, ruled similarly by a Provincial and Council. Of these there were already eight at the time of the death of the Mother Foundress.

The special aim of the Institute being to spread the faith among the infidel, it is placed under the authority of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda.

In a circular letter, dated February 4, 1889, and addressed to the Superiors throughout the Institute, Mother Mary of the Passion expresses herself thus :—

"Now that numbers have rendered our organisation more complete, I wish to recommend respect for the Hierarchy in every quarter.

"Those in office should leave all necessary latitude to their subordinates. Thus, the Mother-Assistant should give free scope to those who are charged with various offices in the convent; similarly the Mother-Superior should not unduly interfere with the work of the Mother-Assistant, nor the Provincial with that of the Superiors, nor the Mother-General with that of the Provincials. The Assistant-Generals should be in our midst as living examples of observance, whilst at the same time acting as counsellors and support for their Superior-General.

The latter must always be the true centre of the Institute.

"Obedience, union with your Superior-General: therein lies the strength of the Institute, and there is the key which will open to you the Gate of Paradise."

I feel quite sure many will criticise this brief sketch on the score of omitting extensive quotations from the letters of the Foundress. One might, indeed, multiply almost indefinitely such quotations from her letters, breathing as they do a wonderfully fine combination of high spirituality and plain practical common sense, now exhorting to that purity of intention which works for God alone and knows in consequence how to accept mortifying contradictions with equanimity and patience, now warning against self-love disguised under the more pleasing name of discouragement, now wisely admonishing Superiors never to correct in anger, but to wait till calm restores to them some semblance of that figure of Christ they are meant to bear. However, in all the spiritual direction of Mother Mary of the Passion there is nothing *new*—and, indeed, how can there be?—but simply the old teachings which the saints are for ever setting forth, tinted, so to speak, by the lights and shades of their

own individual lives and character, but all emanating from the one source: *God is Charity, and whosoever dwelleth in charity dwelleth in God and God in him.*

Thus the value of all spiritual reading is largely subjective, and what the Carmelite will draw from St. Teresa, the Visitation Nun will draw from St. Jane Frances, and the Cistercian will draw from St. Bernard what the Carthusian will find in his own blessed Denis, and so on through all the vast library of spiritual works. Of first importance, then, is it to link the heart with the writers, to know, however fragmentarily, something of their lives, to have with them some special bond of union; then will their writings come to us with the sound, however distant, of the human voice—and that is everything. So is it with the writings of Mother Mary of the Passion. We must know her first, before we read her. The old teachings, which she puts forth anew, will sink all the more deeply into souls—and this is especially true of her own daughters—when the printed page recalls, to some still maybe the sound of her voice, and to all the vision of that Mother's face, so firm and yet so winning, and of those frank bright eyes.

For the moment let us content ourselves with fixing that vision, lest it should fade.

CHAPTER VI

LAST DAYS AND DEATH (1903–1904)

THE last days of Mother Mary of the Passion were marked by extraordinary activity. She was vigorous to the very end. From Fribourg, where she celebrated the crowning of Pope Pius X., she went to St. Gall to examine the tapestries there and find out what might be of service in the work-rooms of the Institute at Paris and in Switzerland. Thence she went in August to Belgium, but was back again at Fribourg in September to meet the recently elected Minister-General of the Friars Minor, Fr. Denis Schuler. The Novitiate at Les Châtelets was her next resting-place. She assisted at the Community Retreat there: "For what must we live henceforward?" she demanded of her Novices: "Our duty; when we are faced with any action to be done, no matter what, we shall do it for Jesus' sake. That will be my aim also, and I promise you, my children, to seek to know my duty and to accomplish it for our Lord."

From Les Châtelets she returned again to

Fribourg to arrange, in concert with the Minister of Public Instruction, for the establishment of a second house in the city, which should form a female section of the *Technicum* or Art School, already existing. By the beginning of November she was *en route* for Rome. She visited her houses at Lugano, Turin and Florence, and also went to Milan to make final arrangements with the Italian Fathers of the Foreign Missions for the foundation they had asked for at Hyderabad, in the Deccan. This last year was in fact marked by as many as fourteen foundations either established or agreed on. Besides those already mentioned, I find the Premonstratensian Fathers asked for and obtained a colony of Franciscan Missionaries for Vohémar in Madagascar. South America saw for the first time the daughters of Mother Mary of the Passion at Santiago in Chili. The necessary preliminaries were fixed for establishing a house at San Remo which was to serve as a home for invalid sisters. Burgos came the following year. In all, in 1903, sixty-three nuns were sent out by the Foundress to the various oversea missions. No wonder she rejoiced. "You cannot think," she wrote, "what radiant, uplifting consolation all my letters bring me, especially those from the missions. What

CHAPEL OF THE NOVITIATE, LES CHÂTELETS.

fine work the Institute is doing! How we should thank God for deigning to use the lowliness of His servants!"

On arriving at Rome, Mother Mary of the Passion found several of the Provincial Superiors already assembled, preparatory to the General Congregation convoked for November. "It is wonderful," she wrote, "how this General Congregation seems meant to be marked by a spirit of peace and union. During the last seven years we have spread beyond all belief, and yet I can see quite plainly that, even far away from me, the family spirit and mutual charity—those precious treasures—are more than ever ours."

The Institute at this date numbered nearly three thousand religious, and, in its eight Provinces, had eighty-two houses scattered in every corner of the world. This General Congregation was to be the last big official meeting in which the Foundress would take part. Without anticipating an early death she nevertheless wished to set her house completely in order in case God should call her away. Many wise regulations were drawn up, especially with a view to maintaining everywhere the spirit of poverty, obedience and charity. The question of the *native* sisters in the East was also brought up, and the conditions fixed for their admission

into the Institute. It was also an occasion for the Foundress of recalling often to her daughters the nature of their vocation.

" Our first days, at Rome especially," she said to them, " were simply days of prayer and piety. We did not then foresee the Institute as it has since become. The Institute is now a militant Order. We did not know that—we thought we should go on tranquilly, enjoying our family spirit, peaceful, holy and calm : but that was not God's plan. Expiation demands conflict : and the result—you see it before you.

" However hard our active and missionary life may be, it is far from being outside our calling, which is meant to entail suffering, sorrow and every kind of affliction. Trials will never cease as long as our vocation as victims remains.

" . . . This militant life seems sometimes incompatible with meditation. Nevertheless, it was the life that Jesus led, and Mary and Joseph. No sooner are the sorrows of Bethlehem over than exile comes—then Jesus in the Temple—the death of Joseph—the treason of Judas—the persecution of Saul.

" The militant life was a hard one for the Holy Family. Across the deserts of Egypt the Blessed Virgin could not enjoy, as at

Nazareth, the sweetness of meditation. Nevertheless, Mary carried about with her the interior life—*kept all these things in her heart.* St. Francis used to say, 'Make a cell for yourselves which you can carry with you always.'

"O Holy Family, do not let us be drawn away from God by our militant life!"

The General Congregation did not finally disperse before all had been received in cordial audience by Pope Pius X.

In February of the following year Mother Mary of the Passion went to San Remo for the purpose of making there the foundation already agreed upon. She rented a small villa and took possession, with six of her daughters, on the fifth of the month. Here she spent fully six weeks, supervising the erection of a little Chapel, and doing much work in the garden with her own hands The house was placed under the protection of Our Lady of Guadeloupe.

Towards the end of March she was at Grottaferrata. Thence she passed on to Rome. It was to be her last visit. The Community were about to enter into Retreat, and, as was often her custom, Mother Mary of the Passion gave them, on such occasions, of her best. It was Easter-time, and the theme of the instructions was the Resur-

St. Helen's Chapel, Rome

rection of Christ. "You must try to realise," she said, "the words of the Pope: *Renew all things in Christ:* but what is meant by a renewal—surely a resurrection? Christ is looking for a change in the Catholic world. For your part, rebellious wills must die that the will of God may live and reign in your hearts, on earth as in Heaven. If you can attain to this resurrection of your souls, all will be well, and certainly such a resurrection will spread and cross the seas, and the strength of your love will light a flame which will stretch over the earth, over men and over the entire world. Let us, as best we may, *be* Truth and Charity; that is to bring God into our lives, and He is all powerful."

On April 11 Mother Mary of the Passion left Rome never to return. The next few months pass in a whirl of travel. Through Assisi, Florence and San Remo she passes on to Marseilles and gives a final Conference to the Community. "Eat, my children, day by day the bread God gives your souls. When we say, *Give us this day our daily bread*, we are asking for what is necessary for our bodies, but especially also for what is necessary for our souls. This bread God never refuses, and we must eat it when it is dry and bitter just as much as when it is white and sweet; God always gives us what

is best for our souls, and the great secret of sanctity is always determination."

By the end of May she has passed through Paris and Lyons and is at Fribourg. Thence, through north Italy and the south of France, she goes into Spain to arrange about the Foundation at Burgos. Everything prospers, and she writes glowing accounts :—

"Burgos, ancient capital of the kings of Castille, is still like a city of the Middle Ages, forgotten by the modern world. The only dogs one sees are greyhounds. They make one fancy they have slipped from the lead of a page, and are hurrying after some mediæval knight, their master. The storks are another peculiarity. On every church there is a nest of them, with a dozen or so pretty storks doing great antics around the towers.

"After all, Burgos is just a city of memories. The grand families have left her and followed the court to Madrid; and now, lo and behold, the mystical descendants of the founders of Burgos are coming back and making their nest there too, side by side with the storks of the Middle Ages." [1]

From Burgos Mother Mary of the Passion

[1] There is a tradition—born out by heraldry—that the foundation of the old capital of Castille was due to one of the ancestors of the Chappotin family.

went to Paris, to arrange for the printing of the *Coutumier* at the fine press of the Institute at Vanves. Thence to St. Gall, where negotiations were on foot for establishing a convent where the nuns could receive the numerous Italians who leave Italy in order to earn a livelihood in the various tapestry works of the town. From Switzerland she went into Belgium, visiting Woluwe, near Brussels—where the new building for the convent was almost completed—and Gooreind. Then to Les Châtelets for the last time. The house must have been full of memories for her. She bids her daughters "suffer with Jesus and never forget that they are souls consecrated to God." France at the moment was pursuing one of her periodical policies of persecution. "The point of our vocation," wrote the Foundress, "becomes more and more apparent. In the midst of so many evils there is need of victims to soften the just anger of God. Our Lady said she could no longer restrain the punishing arm of her Son. It is for us now to stay this avenging and all-powerful hand, and, like Esther, to present ourselves before the King of Kings, and induce Him to let justice give place to mercy."

At Fribourg, where she went after leaving Les Châtelets, Mother Mary of the Passion

spoke most forcibly, almost passionately, to her daughters of the dignity of that consecration to God which the religious life implies. These were to be almost her last words: "Oh, if you could only grasp and understand what it means to be consecrated to God!" she said to them. "Consecration is the grandest and most sublime and most wonderful of graces. Men have always had some notion of its value. At every stage, a thing offered to God has been looked on with awe, and never spoken of but with respect.

". . . . To offer oneself, that is the most perfect act of religion a creature can perform towards the Creator. In the old days, in Religious Orders, people bound themselves to God's service by engagements which nothing could ever break.

" . . . . Now we don't think like that: Faith is weakening. Since the Revolution, which has uprooted the legal status of religious life, the Church sometimes dispenses from vows, but what of the Consecration? Nothing can ever take away from souls, however guiltily weak they may be, that sacred character."

Then, turning to the political world of 1904, she said at this time to her daughters at Fribourg, with a prescience needing but ten years for its fulfilment: "Oh, if you

could only see the undercurrents of the political world, if you knew what goes on there, how men turn one against another, and betray each other, think only of enriching themselves, and grow gross with money! Envy and egoism are the only rulers; it is impossible that such things should pass unpunished by God. A day will come bringing with it a vast self-destructive conflict. You will see, my daughters, that what I am saying will come true."

At Fribourg, Mother Mary of the Passion was to meet a certain Mademoiselle Bigard. The latter was in great distress and, following the advice she had received from approved sources, now came to the Foundress to ask her help in saving from shipwreck a work which owed its origin to Mademoiselle Bigard's mother. This was none other than the *Œuvre St. Pierre*, founded at Caën in Normandy, for the formation of native clergy to work on the missions, and many years later mentioned by Pope Benedict XV in his Encyclical "Maximum illud" (1919). This same Pope, by a decree dated April 28, 1920, took the work definitely under the protection of the Holy See, and in consequence it is now known as the *Œuvre Apostolique de St. Pierre Apôtre.*

Before this auspicious event, however, the

Œuvre had to pass through many difficulties. The death of Madame Bigard in January, 1903, was a very serious blow, yet the efforts of the preceding fourteen years had met with a very satisfactory measure of success; forty-five burses had been founded in perpetuity in native seminaries, the education expenses of fourteen seminarists had been paid, and thirty-four native priests had passed out on to the missions. The greater its success, however, the more insidious were the attacks directed against it, and now a campaign was set on foot inspired by regret at seeing the fortune of Madame Bigard entirely absorbed by the good work. Mademoiselle Bigard felt herself unable to sustain the burden, and so it was that in this autumn of 1904 she offered to the Foundress of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary a work the weight and the responsibilities of which she felt to be beyond her strength.

Mother Mary of the Passion cheerfully accepted the task so evidently entrusted to her by Providence. Her keen appreciation of the needs of the missions showed her clearly the immense advantage to be gained by supporting as effectively as possible the recruiting and formation of a native clergy. Her daughters would be able to contribute to the work by the concerted action of

determined effort and prayer, and if trials were necessary—and indeed the storm was threatening—the Institute would not shirk a period of strife and struggle to preserve so precious a trust.[1]

[1] Confident in the help of their holy Foundress, and faithful to the trust she had left to them, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary courageously endeavoured to keep the *Œuvre de St. Pierre* afloat. It was not an easy task, as long as the legality of the work remained in question. This went on for nearly six years, from 1905 to 1910. In the September of 1910 matters came to a head when the *Œuvre* was cited before the courts at Fribourg, its headquarters being at the Convent of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in that town. The plaintiffs demanded not merely the reversal of the Will of Madame Bigard, but also the suppression of the *Œuvre de Saint Pierre* itself. An energetic defence was organised, and the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary secured much invaluable and devoted help from among the prominent Catholics of the city. The case was still unfinished when the war broke out, and all had to be postponed. Not till 1917 was the case finally decided in favour of the defendants.

This happy event was the immediate signal for renewed activity on the part of the *Œuvre*. The Administrative Council (President, Secretary, and Treasurer being all, it should be remembered, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary) notified Cardinal Van Rossum, Prefect of Propaganda, about their work. Since its foundation till the beginning of 1920, one hundred and eighty native priests had been ordained through its instrumentality, and no fewer than sixty Missionary Dioceses and Vicariates were in receipt of annual pensions from the *Œuvre de Saint Pierre*.

The Cardinal Prefect showed himself extremely well disposed, being himself most anxious to promote the work on which the Institute was engaged.

The *Œuvre de Saint Pierre* with its statutes was

From Fribourg Mother Mary of the Passion went down to Lugano. Her strength seemed to increase in this land of exquisite loveliness, where Nature, when the autumn comes, trails over lake and mountain, over vineyard and wood, the radiant beauties of her mantle. However, she did not stay here long. One wintry morning of November, at four o'clock, she left for Italy.

The last days, still unexpected, were now at hand, the last tasks were being done. The Foundress reached San Remo on the evening of November 5. The following day she assisted with delight at the clothing and profession of several young friars, postulants and novices belonging to the Franciscan Province of St. Louis of Aquitaine, who, driven from France, had found a home at San Remo. During the next few days her health began to fail rapidly. For long she had suffered in the legs; now inflammation

submitted for approval to the Holy See. This was secured by a special decree of April 28, 1920. Besides the central offices of the International Committee, which meets now at the palace of Propaganda Fidei at Rome, there are National Directors in Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, etc.

Such is now the work of which Mother Mary of the Passion may well be looked on as the second Foundress, for had it not been for her foresight and the persevering energy of her daughters there can be little doubt that the *Œuvre de Saint Pierre* would long since have perished under its early trials.

set in, accompanied by great pain, and an abscess began to form. She still, however, continued her usual work, and made frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament in that little Chapel of wood she has herself done so much to beautify. One day at recreation she suddenly said to her sisters, "Some deaths make a great gap; when I die there will be an immense void in the Institute, but all the same there will be nothing to fear: the Institute will follow its course as before. If it was my work, it would perish with me, but it is the work of God."

On November 12 she was forced to take to her bed, and the following day confessed with great devotion to her old friend and faithful supporter, Fr. Raphael Delabre. She remained in bed till the morning of Tuesday, November 15. Shortly after midnight she received Holy Communion. About eight o'clock she said, "I must shake off all this," got up and walked about her room, supported on the arms of two of her daughters. Then she rested in the armchair, and finally lay down once more on a narrow little bed, whilst her own was being made. This little bed—*bien pauvre et bien misérable*, we read—she refused to exchange for the other. At ten o'clock she attended to the most pressing of such letters as had arrived for her. "It

has got to be done," she said, "and that's enough." Her daughters wanted her to see a doctor. She refused: "The doctor would not know me, and you would think yourselves bound to do all he might prescribe for me. Don't be afraid: I shall tell you when I want anything. I shall be all right in a day or so." They left her alone for a little space. At half-past twelve Mother Mary Monica announced that the Mother was sinking. Priest and doctor were hastily summoned. The latter could do nothing. "It is too late," he said. The former, Vicar of the Franciscan House at San Remo, gave absolution to the dying Foundress and anointed her. At seven minutes past two she quietly died, surrounded by her daughters, among whom were three who had followed her faithfully from the far-off days at Maduré in India. To her Assistant-General, Mother Mary of the Redemption—one of the de Geslin—she had written on a tiny sheet of paper shortly before her death, "Work for me, I shall pray for you." Her last message —*work*: her last promise—*prayer*.

To-day Mother Mary of the Passion rests among her daughters at Rome at the house in the Via Giusti.

Among the many and glowing tributes to her memory, coming from all quarters, let

us conclude with that of one who had known her most intimately, Cardinal Ferrata. The letter was dated from Rome, November 16, 1904, and was addressed to the Assistant-General of the Institute :—

"Reverend Mother,

"My great sorrow in hearing of the unexpected death of the Reverend Mother-General enables me easily to divine your own. Her presence was an incomparable source of strength and light and guidance; her examples, her qualities, her virtues were a continual lesson; her mother's heart, so open, so inexhaustibly kind, was a refuge and a comfort for all her daughters; her rare and lofty intellect gave a tranquil sense of security to you all.

"Reverend Mother, what can I say? That I pray for your dead, so holy and revered, and that the thought of her will never fade from my memory nor from my heart? You know it and you understand. You know what esteem and affectionate veneration I always had for that gifted woman, who loved our Lord and His Church so much, who suffered so much and worked so hard for the glory of God, and who knew how to inspire her daughters with so much piety and love of sacrifice, such mutual unity and such heroism.

"Let me, then, simply say, dear Mother, that having paid a fitting tribute of sorrow and tears to her who was your Mother and guided you along the ways of perfection so wisely and so gently, we ought to lift our eyes towards Heaven, and bow, in resignation, before the adorable will of our Lord, who, even when He sends us afflictions, is a loving Father still. He alone knows the fitting time to call His servants to Him, and certainly He has willed that His faithful servant, after having accomplished in long toil and much sorrow the great and meritorious work with which He had entrusted her, should now come to receive the reward in that Heavenly Home where, with the martyrs of China, and so many other holy souls formed by her who have gone before her, she will continue to protect the Institute, and cover it with graces and blessings, which she will win for it from God and the Blessed Virgin.

"I unite myself to your prayers and those of the Community for the eternal rest of her whose loss we lament. Make use of me if, in any way, I can be of service to you. More than ever am I ready to do anything for you I possibly can; for thus, I think, I may do honour to our dead, and give pleasure to one whom we can never forget."

STATISTICS OF THE MISSIONS

ASIA

Palestine : Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem.—Orphanage, Workroom, Guild.
Bethlehem.—Sanatorium for Children, Workroom, Guild.

Syria : Apostolic Delegation of Beirut.

Damascus.—Day School, Boarding School.
Aleppo I.—Day School, Boarding School.
Aleppo II.—St. Odilia's Orphanage.

Turkey : Archbishopric of Smyrna.

Smyrna.—School, Workroom, Orphanage, Dispensary.

Apostolic Delegation of Constantinople.

Zougouldak.—(Heraclea) School, Hospital, Dispensary.

India : Diocese of Coimbatore.

Ootacamund (Madras Presidency).—Boarding Schools, Orphanage, Crèche, Workroom, Dispensary, Visiting Pagan Villages.
Coimbatore I.—Native Orphanage, Crèche, Dispensary, Hospital, Home for Indian Widows.
Coimbatore II.—School, European Orphanage.
Kotagiri.—School, Dispensary.

Diocese of St. Thomas of Mylapore.

Mylapore (Madras Presidency).—Native Novitiate, Schools, Workroom, Orphanage, Boarding School, Dispensary, Home for the Aged.
St. Thomas' Mount I.—Sanatorium.
St. Thomas' Mount II.—School, Dispensary.

Diocese of Cochin.

Cattiparambu.—School, Workroom, Native Novitiate.
Lurdapuram.—Workroom, School, Catechism Classes.

DIOCESE OF HYDERABAD.

Hyderabad (Deccan).—Schools, Indian Orphanage, Plague Hospital, Catechism Classes, Sisters in Charge of the Sick in the Afzulgan Government Hospital.

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOMBAY.

Bombay.—Home, School, Dispensary, Hospital.

PREFECTURE APOSTOLIC OF AFGHANISTAN AND CASHMERE.

Rawal-Pindi.—Hospital for Women and Children.
Baramulla.—Dispensary, Orphanage.

Burma : VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF UPPER BURMA.

Mandalay.—Nursing in the Mission Leper Hospital, Dispensary, Orphanage for Children of the Lepers.
Chanthaywa.—Novitiate for Oblates Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Native Industries.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF LOWER BURMA.

Kemmendine (near Rangoon).—Nursing in Mission Leper Hospital.

Ceylon : ARCHDIOCESE OF COLOMBO.

Colombo.—Forty Sisters nurse in the Government Hospital.
Colombo-Borella.—Workrooms, Catechism Classes.
Moratuwa.—Boarding School, Day School, Orphanage, Crèche, Workroom, Dispensary.
Hendala.—Nursing in Government Hospital.

DIOCESE OF KANDY.

Nurawa-Eliya.—School, Workroom, Catechism Classes.

DIOCESE OF TRINCOMALEE.

Batticaloa.—Nursing in Government Leper Hospital.

China : VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF NORTHERN CHI-LI.

Pekin.—Day Schools, Boarding School.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF TIEN-TSIN.

Tien-Tsin.—European Boarding School, Home for the Protection of Young Girls.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF EASTERN SHAN-TUNG.

Chefu I.—Chinese Novitiate, European Boarding School.

Chefu II.—Day School, Orphanage, Crèche, European Hospital, Chinese Hospital, Dispensary, Workroom, Catechumenate.

Chefu III.—Chinese Hospital, Leper Hospital, Dispensary, Workroom, Women Baptizers, Visiting the Sick and the Prisons.

Wei-hai-wei.—Crèche, Workroom, Hospital, Dispensary, Catechumenate, Sick Visiting.

Fang-tze.—Orphanage, Crèche, Dispensary, Catechumenate, Women Catechists and Baptizers, Sick Visiting.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF SOUTHERN TSING-TAO.

Tsing-tao.—European Boarding School, Chinese School, Workroom, Hospital, Home for the Protection of Young Girls.

Kiao-chow.—School, Orphanage, Crèche, Workroom, Home for the Aged, Catechumenate, Dispensary, Visiting the Sick, Women Catechists and Baptizers.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF NORTHERN TSI-NAN-FU.

Tsi-nan-fu.—Orphanage, Crèche, Workroom, Home for the Aged, Catechumenate, Dispensary, Visiting the Sick.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF KIANG-SU.

Shanghai.—Hospital, Dispensary.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF SOUTHERN HUPE.

I-tchang.—Hospital, Orphanage, Crèche, Home for the Aged, Dispensary, Catechumenate, Visiting the Sick.

King-chou-fu.—Hospital, Orphanage, Crèche, Home for the Aged, School, Dispensary, Workroom, Catechumenate, Visiting the Sick.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF EASTERN HUPE.

Han-kow.—International Hospital, Dispensary.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF WESTERN SZE-CHWAN.

Tchen-tou.—Boarding School, Day School, Orphanage, Crèche, Hospital, Dispensary, Workroom.

Tchen-tou (Pemen).—Chinese Hospital, Dispensary, Catechumenate, Visiting the Sick.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF SOUTHERN SUI-FU.

Sui-fu.—Hospital, Dispensary, Boarding School, Day School, Visiting the Sick.

Kia-ting.—Hospital, Dispensary, School, Visiting the Sick.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF EASTERN CHUNG-KING.

Chung-king.—Crèche, Hospital, Dispensary, Visiting the Sick.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF SOUTHERN HO-NAN.

Chang-Sha.—Crèche, Orphanage, Workroom, Dispensary.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF KIEN-CHANG.

Ning-yuen-fou.—Dispensary.

KWANG-TUNG : DIOCESE OF MACAO.

Chao-King.—Schools, Workrooms, Dispensary, Home.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF CENTRAL SHEN-SI.

Sian-fou.—School, Hospital, Dispensary, Workroom, Women Catechists, and Baptizers.

Tung-yuen-fang.—Crèche, Orphanage, School, Hospital, Dispensary, Catechumenate, Home for the Aged, Workrooms, Women Catechists and Baptizers.

San-yuen.—School, Dispensary.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF SHAN-SI.

Tai-yuen-fou.—Boarding School, Orphanage, Crèche, Workroom, Hospital, Home for the Aged, Catechumenate, Dispensary, Women Catechists and Baptizers.

TIBET : VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF TIBET.

Ta-tsien-lou.—School, Orphanage, Hospital, Catechumenate, Dispensary.

MONGOLIA : VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF CENTRAL MONGOLIA.

Si-wan-tze.—Boarding School, Crèche, Orphanage, Dispensary.

Siang-houo-ti (Tai-hai).—Boarding School, Crèche, Orphanage, School, Workroom, Dispensary, Catechumenate.

Nan-hoa-tsien.—Day School, Boarding School, Crèche, Orphanage, Dispensary.
Tsi-sou-mou.—Boarding School, Crèche, Orphanage, Workroom, Dispensary.

MANCHURIA: VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF NORTHERN MANCHURIA.
Harbin.—Dispensary, Visiting the Sick.
Chang-chung.—Boarding School, Orphanage.

Japan: DIOCESE OF NAGASAKI.
Biwasaki.—Leper Hospital, Orphanage, Crèche, Workroom, Dispensary, Catechumenate, Home for the Aged, Women Catechists, Visiting the Sick.
Hitoyoshi.—Day Nursery, Workroom, Dispensary, Catechumenate, Catechism Classes, Visiting the Sick.

PREFECTURE-APOSTOLIC OF SAPPORO.
Sapporo.—Hospital, Dispensary.

AFRICA

Morocco: VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF MOROCCO.
Casablanca I.—Orphanage, Nursery, Club.
Casablanca II.—Hospital.
Casablanca III.—Nursery.
Fez.—European Hospital, Native Hospital, Dispensary, Distribution of Milk, Club.
Rabat.—Crèche, Distribution of Milk, Club.
Meknès.—Schools, Club, Workrooms, Dispensary.
Marakesh.—Club, Private Lessons.
Ujda.—Orphanage, Nursery.

Tunis: ARCHDIOCESE OF CARTHAGE.
Carthage.—Orphanage, Workroom, Dispensary, Association of St. Monica for Christian Mothers.
St. Margaret (near La Laverie).—Sanatorium for Religious, Dispensary.
Tunis.—Hospital, Dispensary.

Algeria: ARCHDIOCESE OF ALGIERS.
Algiers.—Native Industries.

Belgian Congo: VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF STANLEY FALLS.
Stanleyville.—European Hospital, School, Catechism Classes.

St. Gabriel.—School, Dispensary, Lazar House.
Basoko.—School, Catechism Classes, Catechumenate.

VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF THE BELGIAN CONGO.
Boma.—European Hospital, Native Hospital, Distribution of Milk, School, Workroom, Lazar House.
Banana.—Sanatorium for Europeans.
Leopoldville.—European Hospital, Lazar House, School, Workrooms, Distribution of Milk.

VICARIATE OF NEW ANTWERP.
New Antwerp.—Orphanage, Catechumenate, School, Workroom, Lazar House, Dispensary.

French Congo : VICARIATE OF UPPER FRENCH CONGO.
Alima.—Orphanage, School, Dispensary, Catechumenate.

Portuguese Congo : DIOCESE OF ANGOLA.
San Salvador.—School, Orphanage, Dispensary, Workrooms.

Madagascar : VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF TANANARIVO (CENTRAL MADAGASCAR).
Ambohidratrimo.—Orphanage, Workroom, Catechism Classes.
Tananarivo.—Hospital.

Mozambique : PRELATURE OF MOZAMBIQUE.
Beira.—Portuguese and English School, Orphanage.

Natal : VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF MARIANNHILL.
Umzinto.—European Boarding School, Catechism Classes.
Emoyeni.—Boarding and Day School for Natives.

Zululand : VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF ZULULAND.
Impapala.—Boarding and Day School for Natives.

NORTH AMERICA

Canada : ARCHDIOCESE OF QUEBEC.
Quebec I.—Novitiate, Perpetual Adoration, Association for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Protection of Emigrants, Printing Press, Club, Workroom, District and Sick Visiting.

Quebec II. (St. Malo).—School, Club, Workroom, Distribution of Milk.
St. Anne de Beauprè.—Training of Probationers, Hospitality provided for Pilgrims to the Shrine, Guild.

ARCHDIOCESE OF MONTREAL.
Montreal.—Nursery, Boarding House for Girls.

MANITOBA: ARCHDIOCESE OF WINNIPEG.
Winnipeg.—Nursery, Club, Workroom, Catechism Classes, Protection of Emigrants.
St. Lawrence.—Boarding School, Day School, Dispensary.

United States: ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK.
New York.—Nursery, Workroom, Catechism Classes, Protection of Emigrants, Visiting Hospitals and Prisons.

DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN.
Rosslyn.—Training of Postulants, Holiday Colony.

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON.
Boston.—Nursery, Workroom, Club, Catechism Classes.

DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER.
Fall River.—School, Club, Catechism Classes, Visiting the Prisons.
New Bedford.—School, Club, Catechism Classes.

DIOCESE OF PROVIDENCE.
Providence (Fruit Hill).—Nursery, Club, Catechism Classes, Protection of Emigrants, District Visiting.
Providence (Broadway).—*Procure* of the Missions.
Woonsocket.—Orphanage.

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentine: ARCHDIOCESE OF THE HOLY TRINITY.
Buenos Ayres.—School, Club, Workroom.

DIOCESE OF LA PLATA.
Mar del Plata.—The Unzué Orphanage.

Peru: ARCHDIOCESE OF LIMA.
Lima.—Orphanage, Catechism Classes, Workroom.

Diocese of Arequipa.
Arequipa.—Reformatory for Young Girls, Prison for Women, Home for the Protection of Young Girls.

Diocese of Cuzco.
Cuzco.—Orphanage, Catechism Classes.

Vicariate Apostolic of St. Leo of the Amazons.
Requena.—School, Catechism Classes, Club.
Iquitos.—School, Catechism Classes, Club.

Chili : Diocese of St. James of Chili.
Santiago.—Orphanage, Workroom, Home for Young Girls, Catechism Classes, Club.
Curimon.—Novitiate, Workroom, Club, Catechism Classes.

OCEANIA

Philippine Isles : Diocese of Lipa.
Lipa.—School.
Atimonan.—Day School, Boarding School.
Sariaya.—Day School, Boarding School.

Any further information can be obtained from the Rev. Mother at the following address :—

New York : 225 East 45th Street.

Made and Printed in Great Britain.
Richard Clay & Sons, Limited,
Printers, Bungay, Suffolk.

Date Due

Library Bureau Cat. no. 1137

Mary of the Passion, Mother

AUTHOR
Devas, Dominic, O.F.M.

TITLE

922.2
C46d

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED

Convent of our Lady of Mercy,

WORCESTER, MASS

W6-AEK-604